

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

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31. (Original) A method of treating a tumour in a colon using an electrosurgical system comprising:

an electrosurgical generator adapted to generate a radio frequency oscillating voltage output across first and second output terminals;

an electrosurgical instrument having an active tissue treatment electrode connected to the first generator output terminal;

fluid delivery means for delivering electrically-conductive fluid to the tumour to be treated; and

a return electrode connected to the second generator output terminal,

the method comprising the steps of:

enclosing, in a substantially fluid-tight manner, a space in the colon within

which the tumour to be treated is located, and within which at least the active electrode is located;

operating the fluid delivery means at least partly to fill the space with electrically-conductive fluid;

operating the generator to apply a radio frequency voltage between the active and return electrodes, and completing at least a part of a conduction path between the active and return electrodes using the electrically-conductive fluid; and

manipulating the active electrode in the vicinity of the tumour to be treated.

32. (Original) A method according to claim 31, wherein the active electrode is manipulated to vaporise the tumour.

33. (Original) A method according to claim 31, further comprising the step of positioning the return electrode within the space.

34. (Amended) A method ~~according to claim 31, of treating a tumour in a colon~~ using an electrosurgical system comprising:

an electrosurgical generator adapted to generate a radio frequency oscillating voltage output across first and second output terminals;

an electrosurgical instrument having an active tissue treatment electrode connected to the first generator output terminal;

fluid delivery means for delivering electrically-conductive fluid to the tumour to be treated; and

a return electrode connected to the second generator output terminal,

the method comprising the steps of:

enclosing, in a substantially fluid-tight manner, a space in the colon within which the tumour to be treated is located, and within which at least the active electrode is located;

operating the fluid delivery means at least partly to fill the space with electrically-conductive fluid;

operating the generator to apply a radio frequency voltage between the active and return electrodes, and completing at least a part of a conduction path between the active and return electrodes using the electrically-conductive fluid; and

manipulating the active electrode in the vicinity of the tumour to be treated; and

wherein the electrosurgical instrument comprises a shaft, and the active and return electrodes are located on a distal end of the shaft, the method further comprising the steps of positioning the proximal end of the shaft to extend out of the space, and manipulating the active electrode by moving the proximal end of the shaft.

35. (Original) A method according to claim 31, wherein the electrically-conductive fluid is supplied to the space continually, and the method further comprises the step of removing waste matter from within the space.

36. (Original) A method according to claim 31, wherein the electrically-conductive fluid is a gas.

37. (Original) A method according to claim 31, wherein the space is enclosed by means of a flexible enclosing member which forms a seal with a portion of the colon.

38. (Original) A method according to claim 37, wherein the method further comprises the step of reducing the pressure within the space to a level below air pressure in the immediate vicinity outside the space.

39. (Amended) A method ~~according to claim 37,~~ of treating a tumour in a colon using an electrosurgical system comprising:

an electrosurgical generator adapted to generate a radio frequency oscillating voltage output across first and second output terminals;

an electrosurgical instrument having an active tissue treatment electrode connected to the first generator output terminal;

fluid delivery means for delivering electrically-conductive fluid to the tumour to be treated; and

a return electrode connected to the second generator output terminal,

the method comprising the steps of:

enclosing, in a substantially fluid-tight manner, a space in the colon within

which the tumour to be treated is located, and within which at least the active electrode is located;

operating the fluid delivery means at least partly to fill the space with electrically-conductive fluid;

operating the generator to apply a radio frequency voltage between the active and return electrodes, and completing at least a part of a conduction path between the active and return electrodes using the electrically-conductive fluid; and

manipulating the active electrode in the vicinity of the tumour to be treated;

wherein the space is enclosed by means of a flexible enclosing member which forms a seal with a portion of the colon; and

wherein the flexible enclosing member includes a proximal bung and a distal bung.

40. (Original) A method according to claim 39, including the further step of inflating the colon by delivering conductive fluid to the space through a first opening in the distal bung so that the tumour can be treated by the active electrode.

41. (Original) A method according to claim 40, including the further step of inserting into the space through the first opening an endoscope having a first channel for delivering the conductive fluid and a second channel for inserting the active electrode.

42. (Original) A method according to claim 40, including the further step of removing the conductive fluid from the space through a second opening in the proximal bung.

43. (Original) A method according to claim 37, wherein the flexible enclosing member is inserted endoscopically into the space through the colon's lumen.

44. (Amended) A method of ~~according to claim 37,~~ treating a tumour in a colon using an electrosurgical system comprising:

an electrosurgical generator adapted to generate a radio frequency oscillating voltage output across first and second output terminals;

an electrosurgical instrument having an active tissue treatment electrode connected to the first generator output terminal;

fluid delivery means for delivering electrically-conductive fluid to the tumour to be treated; and

a return electrode connected to the second generator output terminal,

the method comprising the steps of:

enclosing, in a substantially fluid-tight manner, a space in the colon within which the tumour to be treated is located, and within which at least the active electrode is located;

operating the fluid delivery means at least partly to fill the space with

electrically-conductive fluid, the space being enclosed by means of a flexible enclosing member which forms a seal with a portion of the colon;

operating the generator to apply a radio frequency voltage between the active and return electrodes, and completing at least a part of a conduction path between the active and return electrodes using the electrically-conductive fluid; and
manipulating the active electrode in the vicinity of the tumour to be treated; and

~~including the further step of laparoscopically inserting a flexible sleeve to~~
thereby surround a region of the colon containing the tumour to be treated and apply a second pressure against a first pressure resulting from the filling of the space with the electrically-conductive fluid.

45. (Original) A method according to claim 44, wherein the flexible enclosing member includes a proximal bung and a distal bung and wherein the proximal and distal bungs form a pressure seal against both the colon and the pressure applied via the inflatable sleeve.

46. (Original) A method according to claim 44, wherein the active electrode is manipulated to remove the tumour and a region of the colon within which the tumour is located once the blood supply and lymphatics of the region have been disconnected.

47. (Original) A method according to claim 40, including the further step of

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inserting into the space through the first opening an endoscope having a fluid channel for delivering the conductive fluid and an instrument channel for inserting the active electrode.